में यही स्थिति रही, तो भुखमरी की स्थिति पैदा हो जाएगी। मैं केन्द्रीय सरकार से आग्रह करता हूं कि इस मामले में यदि हस्तक्षेप नहीं किया जाएगा, कारवाई नहीं की जाएगी, तो बिहार में भयंकर अकाल की स्थिति होगी। इस सुखाड़ से बिहार को बचाया जाए। जो भूगर्भ जल है, अभी जो जल के स्रोत हैं नहर के माध्यम से, उनको किसानों को उपलब्ध कराने के लिए कारवाई करने में राज्य सरकार कोताही बरत रही है, इसलिए मैं केन्द्रीय सरकार से इसमें हस्तक्षेप करने की मांग करता हूं।

प्रो0 राम देव भंडारी (बिहार) : उपसभापति महोदय, मैं भी अपने को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूं।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall take up the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005. Shri A. Raja to move.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A.RAJA): Sir, I beg to move"

> "That the Bill further to amend the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the Project Tiger has been under implementation since 1973 as a scheme of the Government of India. Since then, the Project coverage has also increased over the years, from the initial 9 tiger reserves to 28 reserves at present. As many as 17 States are involved in the field implementation of the Project.

The Government of India has taken up this project to promote conservation of tigers, since the significance of its conservation has ramifications beyond State boundaries. Management of forests and wildlife is primarily the responsibility of concerned States. Hence, for the field implementation of the project, States - which also provide matching grants to recurring items of expenditure - deploy field staff/officers and give their salaries. The Project Tiger Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Forests is mandated with the task of providing technical guidance and funding the project.

The Tiger Reserves are faced with ecological disturbances and various other problems. Fragmentation of habitats occur owing to overuse of forest habitats, apart from conflicting land uses leading to loss of habitat. Such overuse of forest resources distorts the forest dynamics thereby affecting the habitat quality to support natural prey base and natal areas for tigers to breed. There are also, in some cases, significant resident population in villages having many cattle which graze in forests leading to their ecological degradation, apart from major sources of regular or intermittent disturbance, such as temples and commercial entities such as tea estates. This also leads to man-animal conflicts, resulting in tiger and prey mortality. Accordingly, we need to strengthen our efforts for the conservation of the species. Several constraints affect field implementation of tiger conservation activities. The events in the recent past, including, in particular, evidence of large scale poaching, have highlighted the fact that there is a need in the States for greater commitment and vigilance, apart from strengthening the system at Government of India. These concerns can only be effectively addressed by providing statutory authority to the Project Tiger by creating the National Tiger Conservation Authority, apart from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, as recommended by the Tiger Task Force appointed by the Prime Minister. The Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests, in its 154th Report had also strongly emphasized the creation of the said Bureau as a statutory body under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

There is no enabling provision in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for constituting a body/authority like Wild Life Crime Control Bureau to take measures for preventing and combating wildlife crimes. Hence, there is a need for providing an enabling provision in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. These amendments will provide a statutory basis for constituting the "Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau" (Wildlife Crime control Bureau) by making enabling provisions.

Subsequent to giving the amendment notice relating to the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005 pending in this House, the Ministry of Environment and Forests had received some suggestions for making some modifications in the pending Bill to remove the apprehensions of the tribal people living in and around of the tiger reserves. Though the provisions contained in the Bill adequately protect such interests, a few changes have been made in some of the provisions of the Bill.

1.00 P.M.

The proposed amendment would address the ecological as well as the administrative concerns for conserving tigers, by creating the National Tiger Conservation Authority, which would provide a statutory basis for protection of tiger reserves, apart from ensuring protection of wildlife through the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. It would also address the livelihood concerns as well as man-wild animal conflicts in the fringe areas of tiger reserves.

Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill to the House for consideration and passing. Now, I seek the suggestions of the hon. Members and thereafter I would reply.

The question was proposed.

श्री कांजीभाई पटेल (गुजरात) : उपसभापति महोदय, आज इस गौरवान्वित सदन में मुझे "The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005" के बारे में बोलने का अवसर प्रदान करने के लिए मैं आपका आभारी हूँ।

[उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री कलराज मिश्र) पीठासीन हुए]

मान्यवर, "जियो और जीने दो" के सिद्धांत के अनुसार सभी जीवों को जीने का अधिकार है और विशेष कर लुप्त होती जा रही वन्य जीव प्रजातियों को जीवित रखना, इतना ही नहीं उनकी वंश वृद्धि के उपाय करना, यह हम सबकी चिन्ता का विषय होना चाहिए। खास कर बाघ यानी टाइगर, जो हमारे देश का गौरव है, उनका रक्षण करना हमारा कर्त्तव्य है। जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने बताया कि आजादी के बाद टाइगर के रक्षण के लिए बहुत कुछ होता रहा और आज भी "प्रोजेक्ट टाइगर" के नाम से जाना जाने वाला प्रोजेक्ट अमल में है। इस "प्रोजेक्ट टाइगर" के 30 साल के अमल के बाद और करोड़ो रुपए के व्यय के बावजूद कुछ समय पूर्व सरिस्का में टाइगर के गायब हो जाने के बाद हम सबकी आँखें खुली और भारत के प्रधान मंत्री जिस संस्था के अध्यक्ष हैं, "The National Board for Wild Life", उसमें टाइगर conservation के विषय में गहराई से विचार-विमर्श किया गया। तत्पश्चात् "The National Board for Wild Life" की सिफारिश से एक टास्क-फोर्स गठित की गयी और इसी टास्क-फोर्स के सुझावों को ध्यान में रखकर यह बिल लाया गया है। महोदय, मैं इस बिल का स्वागत करता हूं।

महोदय, टास्क-फोर्स ने अपनी प्रस्तावना के अंत में कहा है, Sir, I quote- "We hope that the agenda for tiger conservation will be secured so that the tiger can be secured. It will need seriousness; it will need a commitment".

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे खेद है कि टास्क फोर्स की अपेक्षा के विरुद्ध भारत सरकार प्रारंभ से ही इस विषय में उदासीन लगती है क्योंकि इस बिल को लाने में काफी देरी हुई है और बिल को प्राथमिकता देने के मामले में भी उदासीनता बरती जा रही है। महोदय, प्रारंभ में यह बिल बजट सेशन में लाया गया था, फिर गायब हो गया और इस वर्षा सत्र में आया। इस तरह हम इसे बार-बार पीछे छोड़ते गए हैं। इससे सरकार न तो serious लगती है और न ही committed. सर, टास्क फोर्स की टर्म्स ऑफ रेफरेंस को ध्यान में रखते हुए उन्होंने बहुत ही

महत्वपूर्ण सुझाव दिए हैं। इस में protection, illegal trade, domestic enforcement, innovative protection, research, relocation, coexistence, fringe, tourism, ecological services इत्यादि समाविष्ट हैं। इन सभी पर समय की मर्यादा के कारण विस्तृत चर्चा में जाना मुश्किल होगा, इसलिए मेरी दृष्टि में अत्यंत ही आवश्यक बिंदुओं पर मैं चर्चा करूंगा। सर, टास्क-फोर्स ने बताया है कि भारत के जो 150 जिले टाइगर डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स हैं, उन में टाइगर के साथ-ही-साथ लोग भी रहते हैं जिन में ट्राइबल्स के अलावा और लोग भी हैं। उन्होंने आगे बताया है कि "The official conservation apparatus gives protection for the sake of the tiger; equally forests in these areas are under greater strain. Fiat forbids the use of forests, but people persist in doing so, often out of sheer need." यानी बाघों का habitat वन घटता जा रहा है क्योंकि लोगों की आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति का कोई विकल्प नहीं है। टाइगर वाले इलाके के एक गांव के दौरे के बाद टास्क-फोर्स ने कहा कि The Tiger Task Force visited Hindla village in Ranthambore and witnessed terrible poverty of these people living inside this prestigious National Park. They have no water, no schools, no medical facilities. They are harassed... " महोदय, ऐसी स्थिति प्राय: पूरे देश में ऐसे वन-प्रदेशों की है और कोई भी इस से इंकार नहीं कर सकता। अत: मैं आगे कुछ कहूं इस से पहले टाइगर डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स में बसे आदिवासी, वनवासियों की गरीबी के बारे में गंभीरता से इस सदन का ध्यान आकृष्ट करना चाहूंगा क्योंकि वन या वन्य-जीवों की रक्षा की बातें यहां रहने वाले लोगों से हटकर नहीं की जा सकतीं, ऐसी मेरी दृढ़ मान्यता है। मान्यवर महोदय, दो दिन पहले हमारे देश की आजादी के 59 साल पूरे हो गए, लेकिन इतने सालों के बाद भी आदिवासी कंगाल है। BPL में जीने वाले लोगों में आदिवासियों की संख्या सबसे ज्यादा है। अनेक योजनाओं के बावजूद उनकी स्थिति में कोई खास सुधार नहीं दिखता है। वनों में बसने वाले आदिवासी आज भी रोजी-रोटी की तलाश में दर-दर की ठोकरें खाते फिरते हैं। आखिर वे जिएँ कैसे? उनको वनों में मजदूरी तक नहीं मिलती है।

उर्दू शायर, साहिर लुधियानवी तो हमारे बीच नहीं रहे, लेकिन उनकी शायरी अमर है। आदिवासियों की दर्दनाक स्थिति को देखते हुए आज मुझे वह शायरी याद आती है, जो शहरों के संदर्भ में उन्होंने रची थी। उन्होंने कहा था-

अरा मुल्क के रहबरों को बुलाओ,
यह कूचे, यह गलियाँ, यह मंजर दिखाओ,
जिन्हें नाज़ है हिंद पर, वह कहाँ है।

साहिर जी को श्रद्धांजलि समर्पित करते हुए, वनवासियों के संदर्भ में, उनकी शायरी में अगर मैं कुछ अल्फाज़ जोड़ूँ, तो मुझे लगता है कि गलत नहीं होगा।

जो रोटी के टुकड़ों को हरदम तरसते,
जो अधनंगे, अधपेट जीवन बीताते,
जो वन में बसे हैं उन्हें भी तो देखो,
मेरे देशवासी उन्हें भी तो देखो,
जिन्हें नाज है हिंद पर, वह कहाँ हैं।

आदिवासी अगर वनों को काटते हैं या ऐसी छोटी-मोटी गलती करते हैं, तो अपने पेट के लिए करते हैं, मजबूरी में करते हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसमे उनकी कोई गलती नहीं है। ऐसा मैं मानता हूँ, क्योंकि हमारे शास्त्रों मे कहा है कि -

बुभुक्षितो किं न करोति पापम्।
क्षीणा नराः निष्करुणा भवन्ति।।

मैं समझता हूँ कि पेट के लिए ऐसे काम करने वाले वनवासियों की तुलना में वे लोग ज्यादा दोषी हैं, जो अपने आर्थिक लाभ के लिए वनों को कटवाते हैं और बाघों की खालों, मुखौटों, इत्यादि को अपने शौक के लिए उपयोग में लेते हैं।

माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, वनवासियों को वनों से बाहर निकालने की बातें भी चलीं, लेकिन वनवासियों को वन से बाहर निकालना आसान नहीं है। उनकी स्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए टॉस्क फोर्स ने जो सुझाव दिए हैं, वे सर्वथा योग्य हैं। उन्होंने जो कहा, मैं कोट करता हूँ- "Policy must accept that the people will continue to live in protected areas. It is not possible to settle the rights and relocate all the families in the reserves." दूसरा, जो उन्होंने कहा है- "The rights of people cannot be expunged without providing alternatives." तीसरा, जो उन्होंने कहा है- "The tigers habitat cannot be secured unless we secure the future of the millions who live on the fringe." और चौथी बात उन्होंने कही है - "In order for resource use to be destructive, the participation of local communities in decision making and in management becomes essential. Regulation is best possible if all are parties to the decision."

टॉस्क फोर्स के इन सुझावों के बावजूद भी मुझे यह कहने में बहुत खेद है कि वन रक्षा की नीति हो या वन्य जीव रक्षा की नीति हो, ब्रिटिश जमाने से लेकर आज तक वनों में सदियों से बसने वाले आदिवासी/वनवासियों को नज़रअन्दाज करके नीतियाँ बनती आई हैं। फलतः वनों के रक्षण में हो या वन्य जीवों के रक्षण मे हो, हमें सफलता नहीं मिली, बल्कि भारी नुकसान हुआ। बहुत देरी से भारत सरकार को यह ज्ञान प्राप्त हुआ और 1992 में वनों के रक्षण में वनवासियों को जोड़ने का निर्णय लिया गया और सहभागी वन व्यवस्था, Joint Forest Management, अमल में लाई गई। जहाँ-जहाँ इसका अमल ठीक से हुआ, वहाँ अवश्य लाभ हुआ, परन्तु आज भी कई जगह इसके अमल में निष्ठा नही दिखती और वन-सम्पदा का बड़ा नुकसान हो रहा है। ठीक उसी तरह वन्य जीवों के रक्षण के विषय मे भी हो रहा है। वनवासियों को साथ रखकर नीति बनाने से आज की भारत सरकार कतरा रही है, ऐसा अनुभव हो रहा है। आज यह जो The wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005 सदन मे लाया गया है, यह उसका प्रमाण है। इन संशोधनों में भी वनवासी को जोड़ने के बारे में कोई उल्लेख नहीं है और वनवासी की आजीविका की समस्या का कोई समाधान नहीं है। इसलिए हम वही गलती दोहराने जा रहे हैं, जो गलती हम करते आये हैं। इस विषय में Task Force के स्पष्ट सुझाव, जिनका मैंने आगे उल्लेख किया है, के बारे में भी सरकार अपनी पुरानी नीति पर डटी हुई लगती है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, सवाल का सवाल यह है कि इस बिल मे वनवासियो को जोड़ने का और उनकी आजीविका के लिए क्या प्रावधान किया गया है? और, अगर इस सवाल का सही जवाब नहीं है, तो वन या वन्य जीवो का रक्षण बहुत कठिन है। इस बिल के अध्ययन के बाद मैं दावे के साथ कह सकता हूँ कि गरीबों की हामी कहलाने वाली सरकार, जिसने यह बिल लाने वाले मंत्रालय मे मेरे एक मित्र आदिवासी राज्य मंत्री भी हैं, और जिस सरकार को हमारे वामपंथी मित्रों का भी समर्थन है, गरीब आदिवासियों को भूल गई है।

महोदय, इस बिल की धारा 38V (4) मे लिखा है कि subject to the provisions contained in this Act, the State Government shall, while preparing a Tiger Conservation Plan, ensure the agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests of the people living in tiger bearing forests or a tiger reserve. इसमे livelihood का उल्लेख अवश्य है, परन्तु इस प्लान के लिये संबंधित राज्य सरकारें पैसे कहां से लाएंगी, क्योंकि राज्यो के स्रोत बहुत ही सीमित हैं। इसलिए भारत सरकार को पूरी धनराशि जुटानी पड़ेगी और बिल में ही इसका प्रावधान होना चाहिए, बाद मे कुछ नहीं हो सकता।

इसके अलावा यह भी सोचना पड़ेगा कि Forest Conservation Act का वनों के विकास के लिए कोई गुंजाइश है क्या? व्यवहार मे इसको कैसे अमल में लाया जायेगा? ये बातें इतनी आसान नहीं, जितनी बिल मे बताई गई हैं। अगर पीने के पानी के लिए वन मे एक हैंडपंप भी लगाना हो, तो FCA उसमे बाधा बनता है। इसलिए मुझे लगता है कि ये सब बातें सिर्फ चिकनी-चुपड़ी बातें है।

धारा 38X (1) मे Tiger Conservation Foundation की स्थापना का उल्लेख है, Eco-development by involvement of people का उल्लेख है। उसमें कहीं स्पष्टीकरण नहीं है कि लोगो को कैसे शामिल करेंगे, इस कार्य के लिए धन कौन जुटायेगा? कहां से जुटायेगा?

संशोधित बिल की धारा 38L के तहत National Tiger Conservation Authority का गठन होगा और धारा 38U के तहत राज्यों मे Steering Committee का गठन होगा। दो मे से किसी भी संस्था में वनवासी को, ट्राइबल को कोई भी प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं दिया गया है और ग्राउंड लेवल पर जहां ठोस कार्य करना है, वहां के लिए कोई भी संस्था नहीं रहेगी और इसलिए मुझे कहना पड़ रहा है कि हम पुरानी गलती को दोहरा रहे हैं। इसलिए इस बिल मे संशोधन के लिए मेरा संशोधन सुझाव है कि -

> That at page 2, line 25, *for* the words 'three members of Parliament', the words " three members of Parliament representing constituencies/ places having Tiger Sanctuary or National Park area" be *substituted*

अगर इसमे ट्राइबल [illegible] सेंचुरी है या नेशनल पार्क [illegible] उनको रखना चाहिए। ऐसा मेरा दृढ़ मंतव्य है।

दूसरा - That at page 5, *after* line 34, the following be *inserted* namely:-

" (c) three tribal members to be elected by the State Assembly:

Provided that if there is Legislative Council in a State, one out of the three members shall be elected by the Legislative Council." साथ-साथ मेरा सुझाव है कि वाइल्ड लाइफ डिवीजन और रेंज के स्तर पर भी दो कमेटियां बनें, जिनमें भी tribals को प्रतिनिधित्व दिया जाए और वनवासियों की आजीविका के लिए स्पष्ट प्रावधान किया जाए।

अंत में दि टाइगर टास्क फोर्स ने संक्षेप में बिल्कुल सही लिखा है कि the moot point in looking at so many solutions is a simple one. Ease the pressure on people, people respond sustainably. Ease the pressure on the forest, the forest will regenerate. The pressure on the tiger is bound to ease. This paradigm of 'inclusive conservation' will safeguard the tiger. Nothing else will. The agenda is within our reach.

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, ड्राफ्ट बिल इंट्रोडयूज हुआ, उसके इंट्रोडयूज होने के पश्चात और कुछ ही दिन पूर्व सरकार ने अपने ड्राफ्ट बिल में भी संशोधन का प्रस्ताव सदन में रखा है। मुझे उम्मीद थी कि इन संशोधनों में वनवासियों को जोड़ने की बात होगी, लेकिन ऐसी कोई बात इन नए संशोधनों में नहीं है। इसलिए मेरा आग्रह है कि टाइगर प्रोटेक्शन एक्ट और इसके कार्य में वनवासियों को जोड़ने का प्रावधान अवश्य किया जाए।

अंत में, मैं आशा करता हूं कि टास्क फोर्स के जो सुझाव हैं, उनके अनुरूप आवश्यक परिवर्तन करके सरकार इस बिल पर अमल करेगी। धन्यवाद।

DR. KARAN SINGH (NCT of Delhi): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate the Government on bringing forward this important piece of legislation. I would like to give a little background because I was personally involved in the creation and administration of Project Tiger. In 1970, when I was a Cabinet Minister in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Cabinet, I was appointed by her Chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife. It was then known as Indian Board for Wildlife now I am told it is National Board for Wildlife. In that capacity, when I had the first meeting, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I realised that the national animal at that time was the lion. The Ashoka lions are there. Our national *chinha* is lion. Therefore, the national animal at that time was the lion. It struck me that the lion is found only in one corner of India, in the Gir Forest, whereas the tiger is found throughout the length and breadth of India -- from the Himalayans right down to Kerala and from the West all the way to Assam and West Bengal. So, I brought this matter up, and in the Indian Board for Wildlife, we passed a resolution urging the Government to change the national animal from the lion to the tiger. This is

not very well known, so, I thought I should give you its background. That resolution went before the Cabinet, and the Cabinet under Indiraji took a decision to change the national animal. This is the first important point that I must mention.

Once the tiger was accepted as to national animal, at our next meeting the proposal that I put forward was that the tiger was gravely endangered. Sir, it was estimated that at the turn of the century in 1900, there were, at least, 100,000 tigers in India. By the time we took over, the number had already dwindled to between 4000 and 5000. So, we said that if we had make it the national animal, then we would have to also set up a project to preserve it. In 1972, we were responsible for the Wildlife Protection Act, which is now being amended, and I put forward the proposal of Project Tiger. We selected nine projects, to begin with, in nine states. That was accepted by the Government, and in April, 1973, I inaugurated Project Tiger in the Corbett National Park. That was how Project Tiger began. For ten years, when I was in Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet up to 1977, I remained President of the Indian Board for Wildlife and President of the Steering Committee of Project Tiger. So, if we had not launched this project, by now, there would not have been a single tiger left in India. With the Prime Minister's support, she was very supportive, I did it and I got an excellent Director of Project Tiger, one K.S. Sankhala, from Rajasthan. He was the first Director of Project Tiger and we began this process. Now, thirty-three years later, the Project has grown to 28 Tiger Projects in 17 States. But, I am afraid the number of tigers has not grown. In fact, there is reason to believe that the number of tigers has diminished. Now, Sir, tiger is such a beautiful animal; it is a glorious animal. *Singhvahini*, if you look at *Durga* riding upon the tiger! Incidentally, one other point Pandityji, you may know, the *Durga* who rides on the lion is known as *Vishnu-Durga* and the *Durga* riding on the tiger is known as *Shiva-Durga*. This is another interesting point. Many people ask: What is the *vaahan* of *Durga*? It depends on which *Durga* you are praying to. I happen to pray to Lord *Shiva*. So, I prefer *Shiva-Durga* who rides on the tiger. The tiger is sacred to Ayyappan also, a South Indian deity.

It has suffered terrible times. First of all, it suffered as a result of the machismo and desire to prove the manhood of the *Rajas*, *Maharajas* and the Viceroys. I must admit that. There was one *Maharaja*, whose name I won't mention, who killed 101 tigers. It was supposed to be a great *praakarm*, to kill tiger. That was unfortunately so. They were massacred.

Then, the Viceroys or the British Governors who came here had to shoot at least one tiger during their stay here because that was the sign of their virility and manhood. पहले तो वह हुआ जिससे टाइगर खत्म हो गए। Then, after Independence Tiger Safaris began. Before we banned it, they were actual Safaris. Tourists came and paid ten or twenty thousand dollars and they would take them to shoot. That was the second thing. That was banned. There are two dangers to this tiger -- deforestation which is the ecological disaster for this country, and the second is, poaching. Sir, tiger skins are available throughout the world. They are poached here for tiger parts, tiger bones, etc. Unfortunately, in the Chinese medicine, tiger bones are supposed to have some aphrodisiac properties to increase virility. Therefore, first of all, the arrogance of the feudal order, then, the attempts to bring tourism into it and finally, the lack of self-confidence evidently among whoever buys these medicines,the tiger is vanishing.

Sariska, as has been mentioned, was the easiest place to see a tiger. It was within three hours' driving distance from Delhi, only next to Alwar. Tigers in Sariska are wiped out. Tigers in Ranthombore are in great difficulty. So, while I would congratulate the Government for having extended the tiger reserves to 27 in different States, it is now long overdue that this sort of a structure, the National Tiger Conservation Authority, should come into being. It has come very late. If it had come twenty years earlier, it would have been better. We might have saved some of the tigers. But it has come, देर-आयद-दुरुस्त-आयद, as they say.

Tiger is facing a severe crisis. In fact, on television, I described it as a terminal crisis because, Sir, when species fall below the biological minimum, then it ceases to grow. These 27 tiger reserves are scattered throughout the country. Therefore, in each tiger reserve, unless there is a sufficient minimum, a critical minimum, of tigers, they will not breed, they will not grow. So, it is not a minute too late. It may already be too late. But, at least, it is worth trying that this National Tiger Conservation Authority is being set up and also the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau.

Sir, there are well-known poachers who have been poaching for 30 years. They go to courts and they escape. They are still in jail. I don't see anybody having been sentenced to any serious imprisonment for poaching. And yet, if you go to Tibet, if you go to Nepal, if you go to China, you can buy tiger skin in the streets. So, this is a terrible racket; it is an international racket. They are big mafias who organise this. They pay a few

thousands of rupees to some locals, they kill the tiger and then, they take it away. So, this is an important point and this is something which needs to be stressed.

Sir, there are just two more things which I would like to say here. One is that generally, the forest cover in this country is shrinking. The satellite photographs show us that our forest cover is less than ten per cent although the official figures, I think, are 16 per cent or 20 per cent.

SHRI AJAY MAROO (Jharkhand): It is 23 per cent.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Twenty-three per cent is the official figure, and I don't want to challenge the Government on that. But the figures that one sees from the satellite photographs are much less. And this deforestation is causing erosion, soil erosion. It is causing disruption. It is destroying the environment. Now, the tigers, please remember, Sir, is the tip of the ecological pyramid. It is not the tiger only that we protect. When we choose the Tiger Project, the whole ecology of that area is protected, the plants, the animals, the deer, all the other animals, the monkeys and all that. So, this is really a major ecological attempt to prevent further deterioration, and that is something which should get top priority.

Sir, the question of human habitation in and around forest reserves is a very important point. There has been a lot of unfortunate controversy about this, but we are very clear that human habitations - not all of them are tribal; most of them are tribal; some of them are non-tribal also - must receive adequate attention; where necessary, there could even be some relocation outside the reserves- because if you have a village bang in the middle of a tiger reserve then you can't really expect the tiger to be protected. So, special care has to be taken, particularly for the *adivasis* and the other *vanvasis*, the village dwellers who are also in a very poor economic condition. They should also be involved. The ideal thing would be if their habitations there cooperate in the process of the Tiger development. They must have a vested interest in it; if there is tourism there, they should get some advantage of that; they should get employment, and their minor forest products and all, they should get. But one thing that should not be done is deforestation, further deforestation, in the name of distributing land to forest dwellers. That would be disastrous, Sir, because what will happen is, the poor forest dwellers will get some land. The land mafia is very strong in this country. The land mafias will come and they will

pay them some token amount of money; they will cut down the timber, and, before you know what is happening, the forests will disappear.

Therefore, we have to be very careful; while fully safeguarding and protecting the interests of the tribal population, we must see that the land mafias and the timber mafias do not take over our reserves. Sir, if this is done, and if the Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau becomes effective, and if, particularly, the Tiger Conservation Authority has representatives of the tribal communities also, I think, it is the last ditch effort--I do not know whether it will succeed or not--to save this glorious animal, which is our National Animal, which is a symbol of our pride, of our power, of our dignity, and I would like to congratulate the two Ministers for having brought this. I would warmly suggest that this Bill should be unanimously passed by the House. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH (Rajasthan): Sir, can you allow me to speak for one second?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA): Yes.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: I want to say, Sir, that if you read the *Collected Works of Jwaharlal Nehru*, there are about 100 letters addressed to him, and he is addressed by Panjditji, "Dear Tiger"! So, it is appropriate that a two-legged Tiger should be speaking about a four-legged Tiger!

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री कलराज मिश्र) : अच्छा किया कि आपने याद दिला दिया ।

श्री नन्द किशोर यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद कि वन्यजीव (संरक्षण) संशोधन विधेयक, 2005 पर आपने मुझे बोलने का अवसर प्रदान किया। वन्यजीवों की सुरक्षा के लिए सरकार ने लगातार प्रयास किए हैं, इसके लिए कानून भी बनाने का काम किया है, लेकिन जो हमारे प्रयास थे, उनमें हमको जितनी सफलता मिलनी चाहिए थी, उतनी सफलता हमें प्राप्त नहीं हो सकी है। जहां तक वन्यजीवों का सवाल है, इनकी संख्या लगातार घटती जा रही है, इसके कई कारण हैं। एक तो इनको जहां रखा गया है, जो क्षेत्रफल है, उसका घनत्व कम है। शिकारी भी इनकी संख्या को कम करने में लगातार लगे हुए हैं। ये जो वन्य जीव हैं या इनकी जो प्रजातियां हैं, जिनका पर्यावरण के हिसाब से और देश के हिसाब से रहना बहुत जरूरी है, बहुत तेजी के साथ तमाम कानून और उपायों के बावजूद भी वे विलुप्त होती जा रही हैं। बाघों एवं वन्यजीवों के बचाव और संरक्षण के लिए सरकार द्वारा उपाय किए गए। वन्यजीव सुरक्षा अधिनियम-1972 के उपबंध में यह व्यवस्था की गयी कि वन्यजीवों का अवैध शिकार नहीं किया जा सकता और इनके वाणिज्यिक दोहन से भी वन्यजीवों को सुरक्षा प्रदान की गयी। दूसरा उपाय यह किया गया कि अनेक दुर्लभ प्रजातियां वन्यजीवों की हैं, जिनका अस्तित्व

खतरे मे पड़ गया है, उन्हें बचाने के लिए वन्यजीव सुरक्षा अधिनियम-1972 की अनुसूची में शामिल किया गया जिससे वन्यजीवों की सुरक्षा हो सके। 1972 में यह नियम बना कि जिस गाड़ी या हथियार से इन वन्यजीवों का शिकार किया जाएगा, वह गाड़ी और वह हथियार ज़ब्त कर लिया जाएगा। इसमें सजा की जो अवधि थी, उसको भी बढ़ाने का काम किया गया। वन्यजीवों की जो तस्करी हो रही थी, उसको रोकने के लिए उपाय किए गए। जो देश के मुख्य निर्यात केन्द्र थे, क्षेत्रीय एवं उपक्षेत्रीय, वहां कार्यालय खोले गए। राष्ट्रीय उद्यानों और अभयारणों का विकास किया गया। प्रधानमंत्री जी की अध्यक्षता में सन् 2002 में एक राष्ट्रीय वन्यजीव कार्य योजना भी बनायी गयी। इन सबका मकसद यही था कि जो हमारे वन्यजीव हैं और उनकी जो प्रजातियां हैं, उनको बचाया जा सके। लेकिन इन कानूनों से और समस्त उपायों के बावजूद भी इनकी संख्या घटी, शिकार के द्वारा, जानवरों की आपसी भिड़ंत के कारण। क्योंकि उनको जिस तरह से रखना चाहिए था, जैसा उनको हमें क्षेत्रफल देना चाहिए था, उस तरह का वातावरण हम उन्हें नहीं दे सके। महोदय, उत्तरांचल में बाघ बचाने की जो हमारी नीति थी और जो 1972 में कानून बना, वह एक तरह से उत्तरांचल राज्य में असफल साबित हुआ। उत्तरांचल राज्य में बाघों की संख्या लगातार कम हुई। वहां पर जो संख्या कम हुई, मेरे हिसाब से उसके तीन प्रमुख कारण थे - बाघों को स्वछंद विचरण का वातावरण न मिलना, उनको पर्याप्त भोजन न मिलना एवं मादाओं का संपर्क न मिलने के कारण आपस में वे लड़कर मरते रहे। उत्तरांचल वन विभाग की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार उत्तरांचल राज्य बनने के बाद चार बाघ आपस में लड़ाई करके मर गए, 12 बाघों की प्राकृतिक मौत हो गयी, 1 बाघ को शिकारी ने मार डाला। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, 18 गुलदारों ने आपस में लड़कर अपनी जान गवाई और जो हथनियां हैं, वे भी आपस में लड़कर 13 हथनियां मर गयीं। भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान का कहना है कि टाइगर रिज़र्व कॉर्बेट नेशनल पार्क में बाघों का घनत्व देश में सर्वाधिक कम है। एक छोटे क्षेत्र में यदि जानवर रखे जाएंगे, तो वे लड़ने का कृत्य करेंगे। जीव वैज्ञानिकों का कहना है कि एक मादा बाघ को स्वच्छन्द घूमने के लिए 50 से 80 किलोमीटर का क्षेत्रफल चाहिए और बाघ को 50 से लेकर 200 वर्ग किलोमीटर का भूक्षेत्र चाहिए। इसमें एक बाघ के साथ चार या पांच मादा बाघ रह सकती हैं, तो ऐसी स्थिति में यदि कम क्षेत्रफल में इन वन्य जीवों को रखने का काम होगा, तो वे आपस में लड़ने का काम करेंगे और आपस में लड़कर उनकी मौत होगी।

वन्य वैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार एक बाघ या नर गुलदार के क्षेत्र में चार या पांच मादाएं होनी चाहिए, जबकि वन्य जीव गणना के मुताबिक वर्तमान में उत्तरांचल के जंगलों में 88 बाघ और 128 मादा बाघ हैं। अगर वन्य जीव विशेषज्ञों की राय मानी जाए, तो उत्तरांचल के जंगलों में कम से कम 300 और मादा बाघों की आवश्यकता है। इस तरह का असंतुलन बाघों के बीच में है। इसी प्रकार उत्तरांचल में 2005 की गणना के अनुसार वहां गुलदारों की संख्या 779 है और मादा गुलदार 842 हैं, लिंगानुपात के अनुसार यह सही नहीं है। हाथियों का जो लिंगानुपात है, वह भी ठीक नहीं है। ताज़ा गणना में 1510 हाथी बताए गए हैं। उसमें 265 वयस्क नर हाथी, 400 वयस्क मादा हाथी हैं तथा गत पांच वर्षों में उत्तरांचल में जो इनका लिंगानुपात है, उसमें असंतुलन होने के कारण 101 हाथी मर गए, जिसमें अन्य कारण भी रहे, जैसे शिकारियों द्वारा मारे गए, बिजली के करंट से भी मर गए, चट्टान गिरने से भी मर गए, आपसी भिड़ंत में भी 13 हाथियों ने अपनी जान गंवाई।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, राजस्थान में एक बिल्ली प्रजाति के सिरमौर बाघ हैं, उनकी भी संख्या बहुत तेज़ी के साथ घट रही है, जो चिंता का विषय है। रणथम्भौर राष्ट्रीय उद्यान में जब बाघों की गणना हुई, तो पता चला कि उस गणना में 21 बाघ कम पाए गए, जबकि रणथम्भौर में इन बाघों की संख्या 45 से 47 के बीच थी। यद्यपि वन अधिकारी इस बात से कतरा रहे हैं कि इनका शिकार हुआ है। बाघों के गायब होने के संबंध में जांच के लिए एक कमेटी बनाई गई, जिसकी अध्यक्षता सुनीता नारायण ने की। इस कमेटी ने सरिस्का, रणथम्भौर और देश भर में कम हुए बाघों के बारे में अपनी रिपोर्ट प्रधान मंत्री जी को दी है। उन्होंने अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि सरिस्का और रणथम्भौर में बाघों की कमी राज्य सरकार की लापरवाही की वजह से हुई है, इसमें राज्य सरकार पूरी तरह से दोषी है। रिपोर्ट में यह भी कहा गया कि राज्य सरकार की लापरवाही की वजह से शिकारियों ने इन बाघों को मारा, जिसमें वहां के वन विभाग के अधिकारी और जो स्थानीय लोग थे, उनका भी इसमें बहुत बड़ा सहयोग था।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मैं एक बात और कहना चाहूंगा कि उत्तर भारत में जाड़ों के समय में, जिस जनपद से मैं आता हूं, उस जनपद में भी ठंडे मुल्कों से, खास करके साइबेरिया की तरफ से हज़ारों पक्षी जाड़ों के समय में आते हैं। ये पक्षी प्रजनन करने का काम करते हैं और जब गर्मियां प्रारम्भ होती हैं तब उनका यहां से जाने का समय हो जाता है, लेकिन तमाम नियमों व कानून के बावजूद भी, इन पक्षियों का धड़ल्ले से शिकार होता है। महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से, इस बात का अनुरोध करना चाहता हूं, यद्यपि इसके लिए कड़े कानून हैं, लेकिन जो लोग ऐसे पक्षियों का शिकार करते हैं, उनके खिलाफ कठोर से कठोर कार्यवाही करने की आवश्यकता है।

अंत में, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करने से पहले एक निवेदन और करना चाहता हूं कि हमारे जंगलों में जो वन्य जीव हैं, आज उनकी प्रजातियां बहुत तेजी से विलुप्त हो रही हैं। इसके कई कारण हैं, जैसे कि शिकारियों का प्रकोप है, हम उनको रखने की उचित व्यवस्था नहीं कर पा रहे हैं, इसलिए इनमें सुधार करने की आवश्यकता है। मेरा दूसरा एक प्रमुख बिंदु यह भी है कि जहां-जहां पर इस तरह के हमारे वन हैं, उनके किनारे-किनारे तमाम आदिवासी जातियां रहती हैं। यह सही है कि उनके जीवीकोपार्जन का कोई साधन नहीं है, क्योंकि वे भूमिहीन लोग हैं। वे जंगल से लकड़ियां काटकर, अपने जीवीकोपार्जन का काम करती हैं। उनके पास अपनी जमीन न होने के कारण, वे हमारे वन क्षेत्रों में बहुत तेजी से अतिक्रमण कर रही हैं। मैं सरकार से यह मांग करना चाहता हूं कि जो इस तरह की जनजातियां है, आदिवासी लोग हैं, उनको वहां से कहीं दूर ले जाकर, बसाने का काम किया जाए। उनको जमीन देने का काम किया जाए, उनको अन्य कारोबार में, रोजी-रोटी के कारोबार में लगाने का काम किया जाए। अंत में, मैं यह कहते हुए अपनी बात समाप्त करना चाहूंगा कि जो हमारे वन्य जीव हैं, उनकी सुरक्षा के लिए सरकार जितने भी कठोर से कठोर नियम बना सकती है, अवश्य बनाए। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): Sir, I rise to support the Wild Life Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2005 with some critical observations. I hope, the hon. Minister would give some attention to my observations. Sir, we know that it is a very important piece of legislation concerning the ecological balance of our nature. I firmly believe that protection of wild life is very, very essential to maintain the ecological balance of nature. But,

sometimes, we see in newspaper reports that at many places some wild life is unnecessarily destroyed by those who belong to the upper class of our society. They are in the habit to miss this, to lose this, to shoot this precious wildlife of the world--it may be a lion, may be a tiger, may be a black deer. I firmly believe, this piece of legislation is not to protect this type of heinous attitude hundred per cent, but I believe that this important piece of legislation will try to protect our wild life. So, in this context I would like to see the inner sight of this Bill, which is stated in a para. Sir, these are only my suggestions. I am not moving any amendments. Why am I not moving? I have seen in the last two-three weeks, the Minister-in-charge of the Ministry moves a lot of amendments on the Bills and I also agree with the amendments which have been moved by the hon. Minister. They may be my amendments also! So, there is no difference between his amendment and mine. I am not moving any amendment. But I have two-three suggestions so far as the Bill is concerned.

On page 2, there is a mention of 'National Tiger Conservation Authority shall consist...." Then it is mentioned about the membership of that Authority to consist of the Minister in charge of the Ministry, the Minister of State in the Ministry, three Members of Parliament from both Houses who will be in the Authority, etc. I would like to say that we are all Members of Parliament enjoying equal status. My suggestion is, if it is possible, please provide one Member of Parliament who is elected from the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes from a Parliamentary constituency which is reserved for the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in this Authority to be a Member out of the 3 or 4 Members of Parliament. This is one proposal of mine so far as the Bill is concerned.

There is another proposal from the Minister for a Committee, the Steering Committee which is constituted by the State Government. I have seen the list of this Committee, but there is no representation of the Member of Parliament representing that particular State. It should consist of a Member of Parliament. A Member of Parliament who is working in the particular constituency and particular State, should be included in this important Committee. It is the piece of legislation by the Central Government, and it would be the Government of India Act. So, I propose like this.

Secondly, there is no representation of MLAs also. It should be incorporated. This is my suggestion so far as the two Committees are concerned.

I have another suggestion so far as the Bill is concerned. On page 6, clause 38V (4), I take your indulgence to read out the para, "Subject to the provisions contained in this Act, the State Government shall, while preparing a Tiger Conservation Plan, ensure the agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests of the people living in tiger bearing forests or a tiger reserve." I would like to emphasise on the last two words, 'tiger reserve'. I would like the hon. Minister to replace the word reserve out of core area. If it is possible, I would humbly request that this suggestion be considered. Thirdly, another important point I would like to mention here is this. It is not in the main Bill but it is in the amendments moved by the hon. Minister, Mr. A. Raja, Minister in-charge of this Department. I am referring to clause 3, which is going to be amended. Sir, I have already pointed out that there is a heinous attempt to destroy our wildlife like tigers, black deer and other animals. All of us know that there are many attempts like this by some people who are living in the higher strata of society and they shoot black deer, they shoot tigers, etc. in order to get joyful moment during their leisure. It is an offence; it is commitment of an offence. What is happening in this regard and what provision you have made in this regard so that such offences do not take place? Here the punishment clause says that it will not be less than three years, but may extend to seven years. It is correct and I support it. But what is the fine amount? It is not less than Rs.50,000. Why should it not be less than one lakh? What is the criterion for keeping it Rs.50,000? It should not be less than one lakh. Rs.50,000 is nothing for those people who are committing such types of offences on various occasions at many places. It should be above Rs.50,000. ...*(Interruptions)*... If it is not less than Rs.50,000 then why should it not be more than Rs.1,00,000? My intention to say this is that it should be like capital punishment. Another important point is that in the Statement of Objects and Reasons there is one line -- I support the Bill -- 'the rights of the tribal people living in and around the tiger reserves'. Sir, it is an important point and I would like to say that this piece of legislation will protect the rights of the tribal people and other people living in this area. So far as tribals are concerned, the right of living, the right of water, etc. should be protected. I am very much happy that the Statement of Objects and Reasons say 'ensuring the agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests of people living inside forests or in the tiger bearing forest areas in and around a tiger reserve. I would like to submit that it should be maintained and it should be implemented throughout the country wherever these types of reserves are situated. ...*(Time-bell)*... I will take two-three

minutes only. When the Statement of Objects and Reasons mentions about 28 reserves in 17 different States, I would like to submit that I belong to West Bengal. The hon. Minister knows the name of Sunderbans, which is one of the beautiful places as far as our country, is concerned. It is a very, very rare experience to see tigers in Sunderbans. I have had occasions to visit Sunderbans many times, maybe, ten or fifteen times. But I am such a person who has not yet seen any tiger in Sunderbans. I would like to submit that it is not Sariska, it is not Ranthambore but Sunderbans is all the time Sunderbans. There is a dense forest, there is a river, there is an ocean, and there is land. A peculiar inhabitation is there. So, I would like to request the Minister that the Government should try its best to provide sufficient funds to protect the tiger reserves as far as Sundarbans Tiger Reserve Forest in our State is concerned. With these words, I support the Bill and conclude. Thank you.

DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN (Nominated): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, at the outset, I should say that the Wildlife Protection Amendment Bill, 2005 is both timely and appropriate. I would like to compliment the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the hon. Minister for introducing this Bill, which is so important at this juncture, primarily because we have a national concern over the dwindling population of the Tigers. The Sariska experience has been none too good in the context of conservation and preservation and there are other locations also where such things could be happening on which we do not have the full information. So, the entire Bill envisages these things that it shall not repeat and we strengthen those of the mechanisms that are critical for both preservation and conservation. As Dr. Karan Singh mentioned, hundred years ago we had something like a hundred thousand tigers in the world. Today, it has dwindled by almost an order of magnitude. I think, it is something like 8000 tigers all over the world. Of course, one need not seek too far the reasons for this. There is, of course, the question of poaching, the habitation laws and, ultimately, of course, the population fragmentation. In all these kind of things, particularly if one looks at the habitation laws you have the problem of population increase, resettlement, agricultural activities, and deforestation. These all add up to the problems related to the tiger number dwindling. So, it is against this background that, of course, India had taken some very pioneering and visionary steps and the hon. Member Dr. Karan Singh himself shared his own experience of pioneering this activity as a part of conservation planning way back in 1972. A Task Force under his

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leadership was created. This was the first official launched Tiger Conservation Programme.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

Then, it was followed by another equally important study that was conducted and that was in 1983 under the Chairmanship of late Madhavrao Scindia which focussed on the dependentcies of the rural people on the forest which had also its implications. Why do we consider all these as important steps? There are several reasons why we want to make sure that we have a programme for conservation and preservation of tigers. As one of my colleagues mentioned, it is one of the important elements of maintaining the health of an ecological system. So, that is one reason why we should have tigers around and it is also one of the top predators. It plays a key role on the population check. That could be the second reason. But, to me the most important reason is the fact that it gives a very good rationale for creating eco-systems, which are critical for the overall environmental integrity of the country. The tiger comes in handy because it is a very unique animal because it can survive under different geographical conditions, climatic conditions and so on. This provides it a very unique capability. But specific to one of the things that I would like to say is what the previous speaker spoke about the Bengal tiger which occupies a very important position not only because of the reasons that he mentioned but it has also been the progeny of white tigers in the country; and if you look at the population of white tigers, of course, it is virtually on the verge of extinction, just 12 white tigers have been sighted over the last several years. It is not an errant genetic reason why you have the white tigers. In about 10,000 mutations of a regular tiger you get one white tiger. So, one can see the importance of white tiger. It is a very rare phenomenon to have white tiger. So, I appeal to the Ministry and to the hon. Minister to conduct those research and other areas of activity to ensure that we can increase white tiger population even beyond zoos in which currently one could see them.

As has been mentioned by the hon. Minister, we have something like 28 Tiger Reserves. They occupy a total forest area of something like 37,000 sq. Kms., which is nothing but 5 per cent of the total forest area of the country. The tiger population, if you look at the Census of 2001-02, is about 3,600. Out of this, half of them really live outside the tiger reserves. Even though there number double. In terms of what the population in 1972

was, half of them live outside the tiger reserves. It is, in this context, a National Task Force was set up. There is a Report. The Report is titiled 'joining the dots.' It has made several important recommendations with respect to conservation strategy for the tigers. And, I am happy to see that this particular Bill, certainly, addresses those kind of issues coming out of the recommendations of the Task Force, as well as the related studies done elsewhere. But, I would like to say a few points, specifically, on actions that could be followed up.

The first one is, based on the past experience of tiger reserves, the proposed set up that we have in the Bill, it is hoped, will set the standards for the management of the tiger reserves -- that is very important -- and enforce compliance at the State-level and a mechanism to periodically evaluate the same and, ultimately, a mechanism for mid-course corrections as and when they are called for. That is one suggestion.

The second one is, there have been new Clauses added in the Amendment Bill. Obviously, they form the core of the Bill. There are questions which are related to the modalities of treating violations. I think, one needs a little clarification. I know, in the additional amendments to the Clauses which were circulated, there is some mention of these modalities of treating violations, mention with regard to penalty impositions, nature of implementing authority, etc. I am emphasising it only because of the fact that it is the very critical element of enforcing this Act ultimately.

The third one is, there have been suggestions by the environmentalists that besides the core and the buffer zones whether there should be a third zone which you call it as a zone of influence. The whole idea of having this third zone, the zone of influence, is that you create a larger landscape around the reserve and this will guide any engagement with people and institutions outside the administrative boundaries and aid in the efforts of conservation. There is some mention of it. Maybe, strengthening of that particular action would go a long way in that overall conservation strategy.

The fourth point I would like to mention is that the forest divisions abutting to the tiger habitat. The forest divisions create their own working plans. The question is : Is there any synergy between the working plans of the forest divisions and the tiger conservation parks? I think, how well is this harmonisation, and if there are mechanisms, which need to be brought in to strengthen this harmonisation, it should be addressed.

Sir, the fifth one comes to something I am a little more familiar with and it is related to the role of space observations. Most of the time we do suddenly realise that something has gone wrong. This is because there is no systematic, periodic evaluation of the various reserves with regard to tiger conservation. The suggestion that I make here is that we have the capability and the Environment and Forests Ministry has been doing an excellent job of evaluating the forest wealth of the country, placing the same before Parliament once in two years. The open forest, the close forest and the total forest details are given. The open forest, today, is something like 12-13 per cent. The closed forest is 9-10 per cent. And, the total forest is not 23 per cent of the total area of the country. But, the important thing is that closed forest, with a canopy which is more than 60 per cent, and, now, you have an intermediate stage of between 40 per cent canopy and 60 per cent canopy, and, ultimately, you are left with around 10 per cent. So, you have three levels in which the forest density is mensurated and reported. Since you do this once in two years, I am only suggesting to the hon. Minister if we could include that information system that is placed in Parliament once in two years on the overall status of forest wealth of the country. The information related to the health of the Tiger Reserves. If you need much more detailed information related to this, I think, that could certainly be done with a better high resolution systems, which India is currently orbiting one metre or five metres. So, this was one more point.

The last point that I would like to make is some of the more recent suggestions that have been circulated, which are more related to the peripheral area management, the question of the people who have been depending on the forest products, how well are they taken care in the Bill. After initially circulating the original version of the Bill, there has been certain additions to the Bill. I fully endorse the provisions that have been made in the subsequent version by way of additions to this particular Bill. I fully endorse the issue that has been addressed there and in the contents which will be put into Act, coming out of these additions.

With these words, I should say that this is a very good step that the Government has taken. I would like to complement the Ministry; I would like to congratulate the Minister for this timely action. I support the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further discussion on Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005 will be taken up on Monday. Now, we will take up Special Mentions.